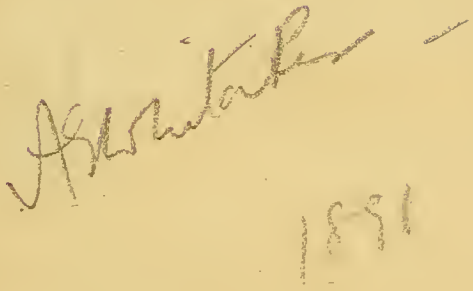
JOHN A. SEAVERNS



London

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Where may be seen on Sale the greatest variety of

Sporting Drawings as Horses, Dogs, Coursings, Fox Hunting, Cock Shooting &c. &c. &c.

INTRODUCTION.

By a detailed series of graphic and descriptive illustrations, it is the intention of the Author of this work to shew the good and bad points in that most noble and useful animal, the Horse. He has adopted the mode of detaching the various parts of the subject; because, by a comparison of the distinct appearances, the general impression upon the memory of the reader is likely to be much stronger than could result from the study of any treatise of a less abstracted nature; to understand which, a knowledge of anatomy, or a constant reference to some scientific work, is indispensable.

This publication is also intended as a Book of Lessons for such young Artists as are inclined to pursue the study of the horse in all the different points of his figure and action.

There is no animal whose countenance combines such correct and powerful expressions of character. The physiognomy of the horse, therefore, illustrating the different passions to which he is subject, as well as the natural bias of his temper and disposition, is an important branch of study to gentlemen of the turf, and to young purchasers: for it is generally considered that, to timid

riders and drivers, the temper of the beast is an object of more consequence than any slight bodily blemish.

In this point of view, therefore, the Author flatters himself that his work will be found useful; and, as his remarks are the result of the most attentive observation during many years, entirely devoted to the pleasures of the field, he trusts that the general principles which he has laid down, as well with respect to power, strength, and the various points of action, as to the physiognomical character and figure of the horse, will be found clearly elucidated in the following Series.

Fig 1

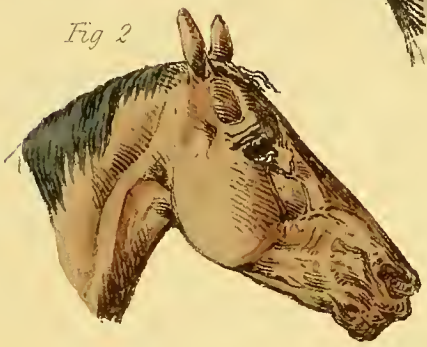


Fig 2

Fig. 3.

Fig 4

Fig 5

Fig. 6.

Fig. 7

PLATE I.

Figure 1.—The head here introduced, in its character, very nearly reaches the perfection of good temper, spirit, and beauty: it ought progressively to diminish in weight and size as it approaches the nose; if pressed by the thumb, the cheek bones should appear to be merely covered with skin, and the jaw underneath should be hollow, with the skin loose. By comparing these remarks with the figure, and contrasting its form with the other subjects in this plate, the reader will possess himself of a perfect knowledge of these requisites in the choice or judgment of an animal.

Figure 2.—Represents a head, not inferior, perhaps, to the former in temper; but wholly deficient both in spirit and in beauty. This head is heavy, and badly set on to the neck; the jaw-bone and gullet forming almost an angle: the nose is encumbered with a great deal of what is technically called *leather*. However perfect this animal may be in all his other points, he will prove heavy and sluggish, and always carry his head most awkwardly and unpleasantly.

Figure 3.—Is the front view of a head, well proportioned, and marked with an expression that bids fair for good temper and spirit: narrow at the setting on of the ears, which, when the look of the animal is marked with particular anxiety, should be brought nearly together at the points, extending in bone towards the eyes, which ought to look rather sideways than straight forward. Let the reader compare the decrease down to the nose, with Figure 4.

Figure 4.—Shews the front view of a head, heavy in spirit and disposition; broad at the point or crown of the head: the increase on the eye-brow is composed of flesh and skin; the direction of the eyes, looking forward, and thence downwards to the nose, displays but little deviation in substance. The distinction will be easily perceived by a reference to Figure 3.

PLATE II.

Figure 1.—Is the expression of rage, with a great deal of vice; this passion will always be conspicuous in the countenance of the horse possessed of these bad qualities; but not to the extent shewn in the plate, unless provoked. Horses of this disposition, by having even a finger or stick pointed at them, will give full force to this character. Many are *taught* this vice: but, whether inherent in the disposition, or acquired, the animals which possess it are still very dangerous.

Figure 2.—This character of countenance, from repeated instances that I have met with, I consider to possess more malicious vice than Figure 1. The horse from which this character was taken, although a good worker when once in harness, is one of the most ferocious beasts of the tribe denominated tame.

Figure 3.—The character of terror, which is the prominent mark of this head, is by some classed amongst the vices of this animal. If it be not a vice, however, it is one of the most troublesome faults incident to the horse: for it embraces all the consequences of all the vices which he can possess; a terrified horse being more to be dreaded than one actually vicious.

Figure 4.—A horse of a sulky character, such as is conspicuous in this countenance, although in some cases rather to be dreaded than otherwise, is sometimes very good at work. The obstinacy of this character, however, not unfrequently turns to restiveness. It is a subject which may be useful, but never can be pleasant.

Fig. 1.

Fig. 2.

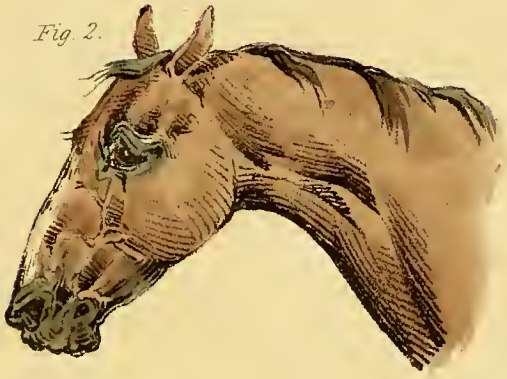
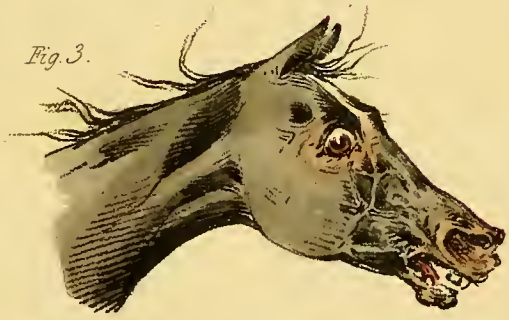


Fig. 3.



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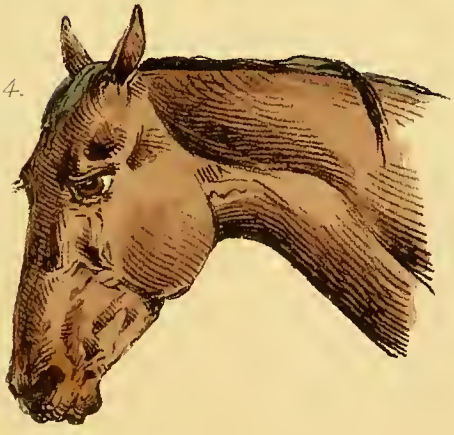

Fig. 1.

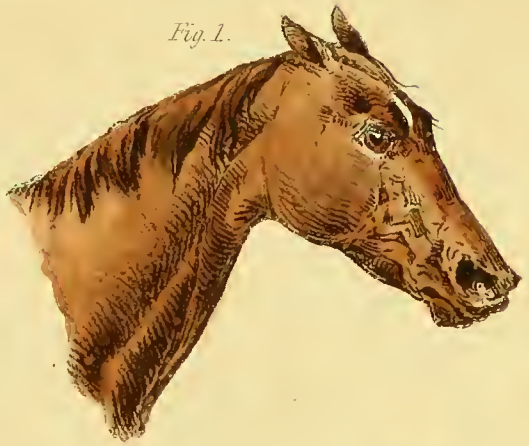

Fig. 2.

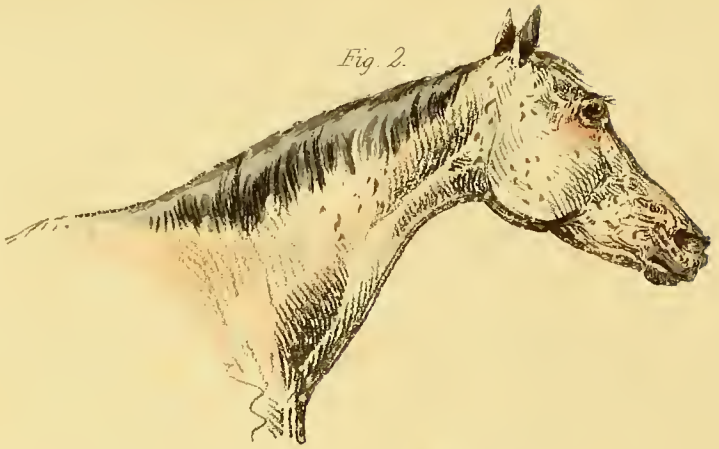

Fig 3.

Fig. 4.

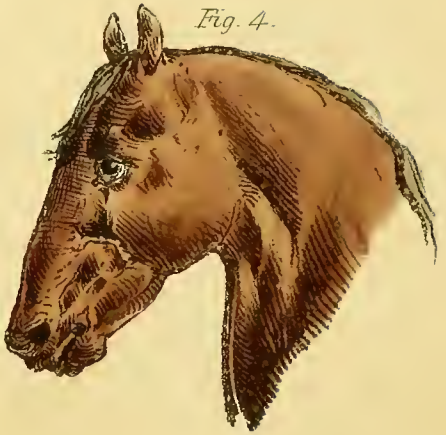

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PLATE III.

These heads are taken from good horses for their separate uses.

Figure 1. — Is as good a hackney as ever was mounted, for work; but by no means pleasant in temper, or manner of carriage. It is very seldom that a vicious or restive horse can ride light and playful in hand. I have proved this subject excessively good at long and hard journies; but at the same time great portion of the labour must be done by the rider.

Figure 2.—This character is good in every respect, beautiful in its shape and action, extremely light and pleasant to ride, and, although rather playful, perfectly gentle.

Figure 3.—I introduce this head, considering it one of the handsomest I ever saw; and have endeavoured with my pencil to embody the most perfect expression of beauty and spirit.

Figure 4.—Is a common-place head and neck. Although the subject from which this was drawn is a very good slow horse, it is twenty to one, with such a form, against his being good for any thing but a cart. The head is well shaped, by itself, but heavy and badly connected; and the animal himself never could either ride or drive pleasantly.

PLATE IV.

Figure 1.—Is a fore leg formed for speed, and perhaps action; but not calculated for permanency. The plate of the knee being much lower than it ought to be, the horse must be considered as a dangerous road animal.

Figure 2.—Is formed to do much work, and last long at it.

Figure 3.—Is good in substance; but rather round, and too straight.

Figure 4.—Is a pair of legs well formed for strength and action.

Figure 5.—Displays the front view of legs badly formed, being what the dealers call made like a dancing master ought to be; but still, if the toe, or point of the hoof, deviate at all from the straight line, it should be this way, as the contrary is extremely dangerous on the road, and indeed any where else.

Figure 6.—A leg made for neither speed nor power, being flat and poor in the arm, round and weak in the leg, thin and long in the pastern, and large in the hoof.

Figure 7.—A pair of legs worse than Figure 5, being weak, badly formed, and hardly good for any thing.

Figure 8.—This appearance is seldom formed by Nature; it is occasioned by hard work, straining, &c.

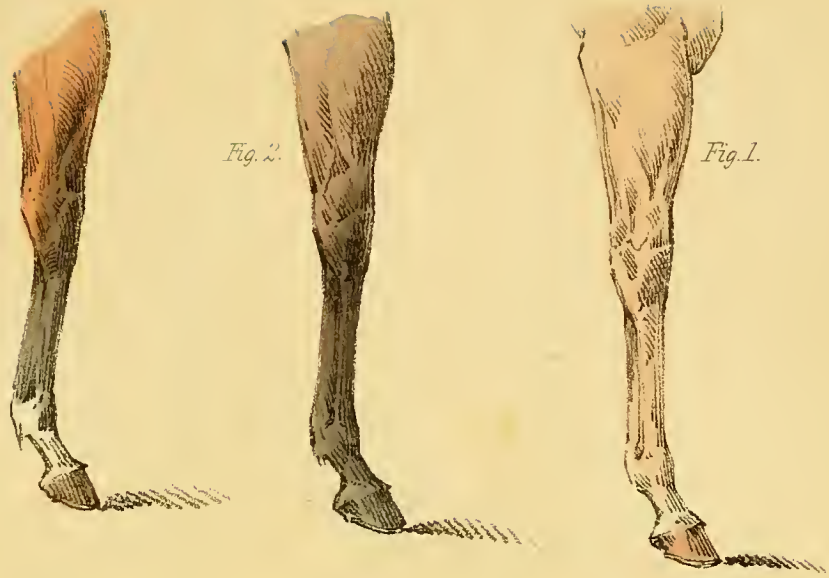

Fig. 3.

Fig. 2.

Fig. 1.

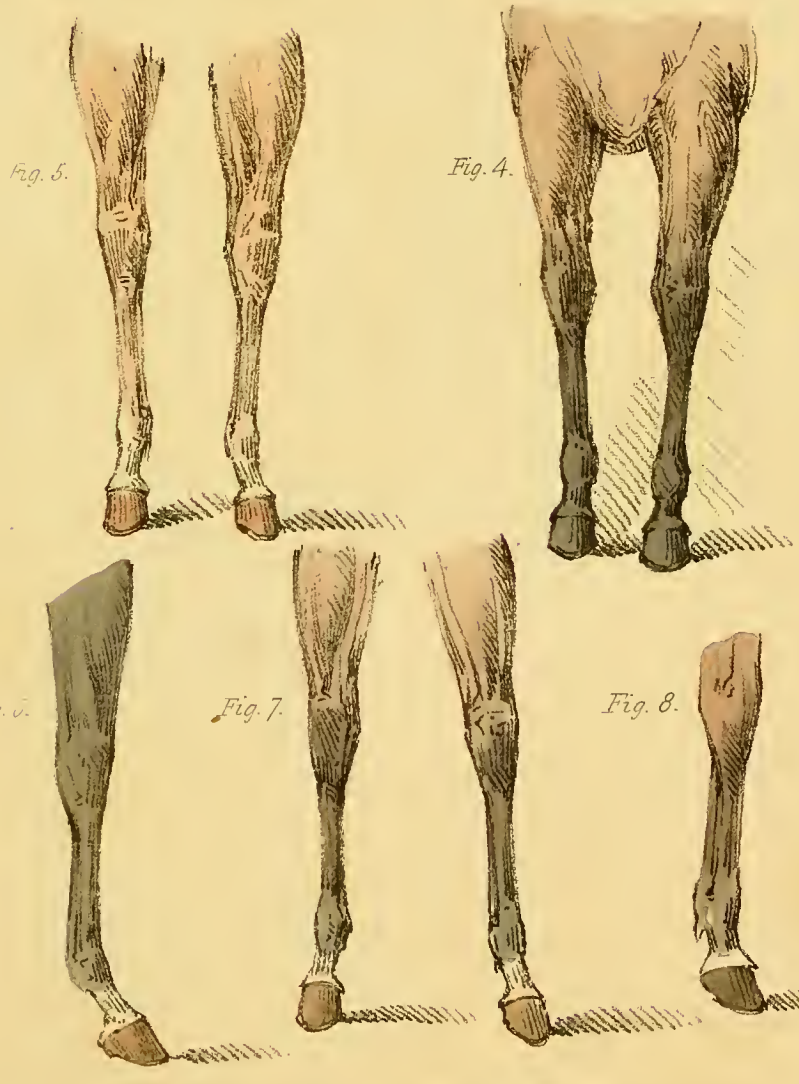

Fig. 5.

Fig. 4.

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Fig. 7.

Fig. 8.

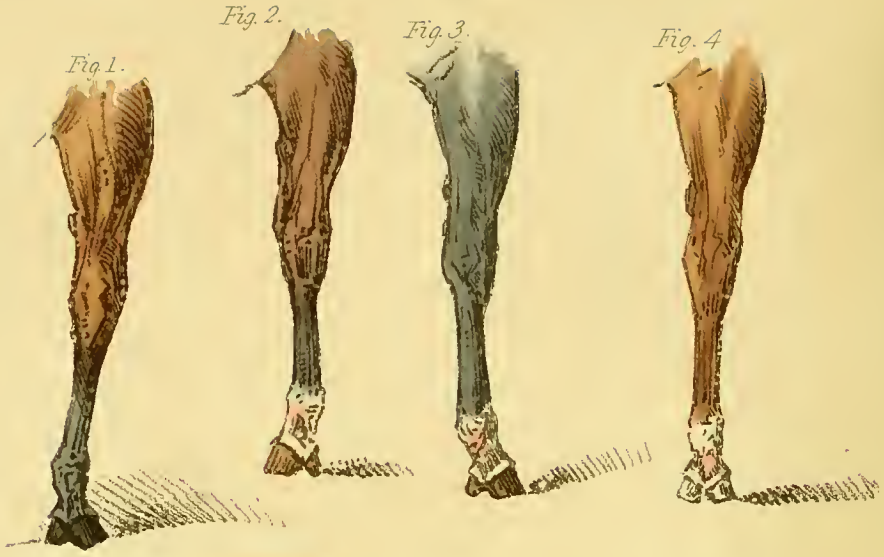
Fig. 1.
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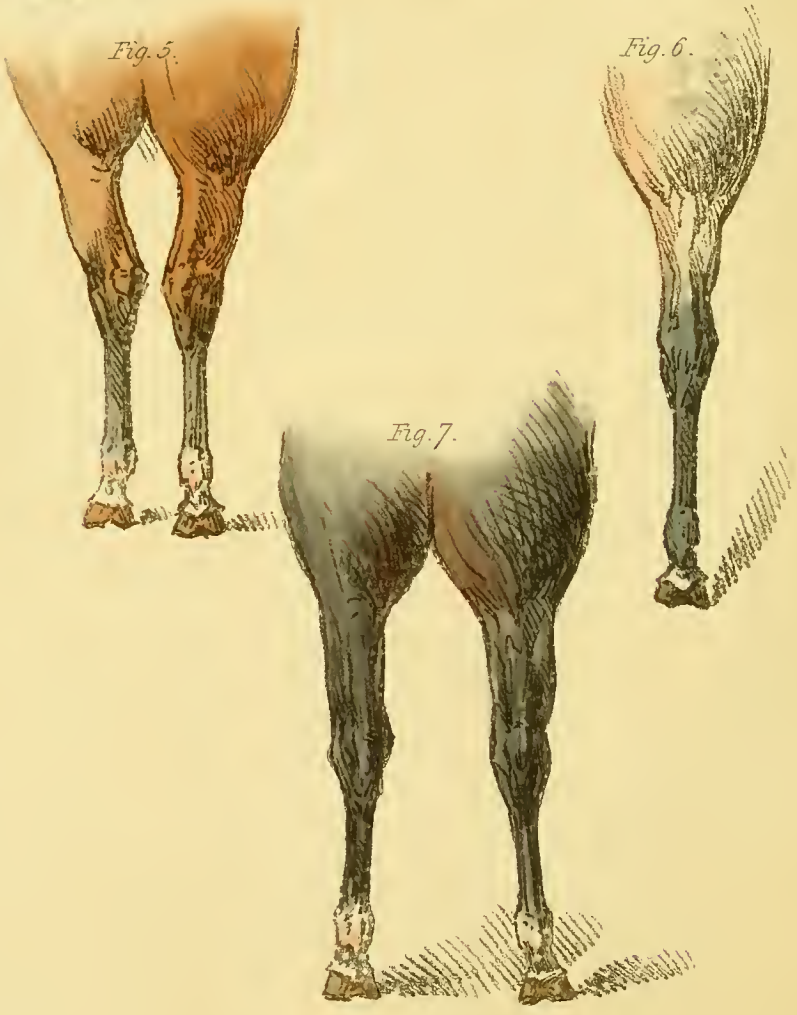


Fig. 5.
Fig. 6.
Fig. 7.

PLATE V.

The Four first Figures are intended to shew the back of the off fore legs: *Figure* 1 is firmly standing on the ground, slightly turned out, which, as I have before observed, is better than turned in; but it is the general way that it should stand perfectly straight in a back view.

Figure 2.—Is the contrary of Figure 1, being much turned in and bent at the knee. This is a bad leg, without one thing to recommend it.

Figure 3.—Is very different to Figure 2, but equally bad; the hoof being turned much out, and calf-knee'd.

Figure 4.—Is a leg square and firmly set on the ground, and likely to stand work.

Figure 5.—Is the best of two evils, standing near together at the hocks: the legs should stand like Figure 6, and both exactly alike; but when that is not to be obtained, the form of Figure 5 is to be preferred. Some people are fond of the form of Figure 7; but it never can last; and must produce an unpleasant action, both to the sight and feeling.

PLATE VI.

Figure 1.—I introduce this subject for the beauty of its neck, and setting-on of the fore leg; both of which are remarkably good: the shoulder is well formed; but not sufficient in depth; the arm, or upper part of the thigh should be set well forward; the elbow turned out and free from the brisket. A horse possessed of those points, will seldom fail of having good action.

Figure 2.—The front view of the breast, formed for strength, beauty, and action. Compare with Figure 4.

Figure 3.—The neck and shoulders badly formed; the neck being of an equal breadth and substance; heavy and thick in the shoulder; broad on the blade; fore legs standing too far under the body; the breast and point of the shoulder heavy, without any mark of muscle. See Figure 1.

Figure 4.—Is the front view of a breast with many bad points; round and heavy in the chest, tucked up in the brisket, and legs badly set on. Compare with Figure 2.

Plate

Fig. 2.

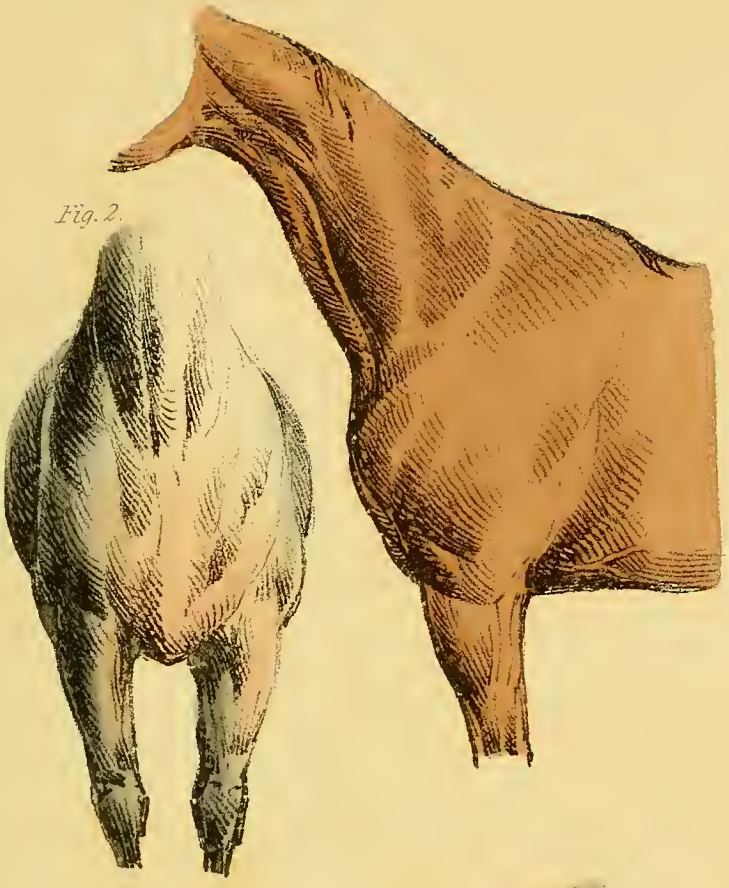


Fig. 3.

Fig. 4.

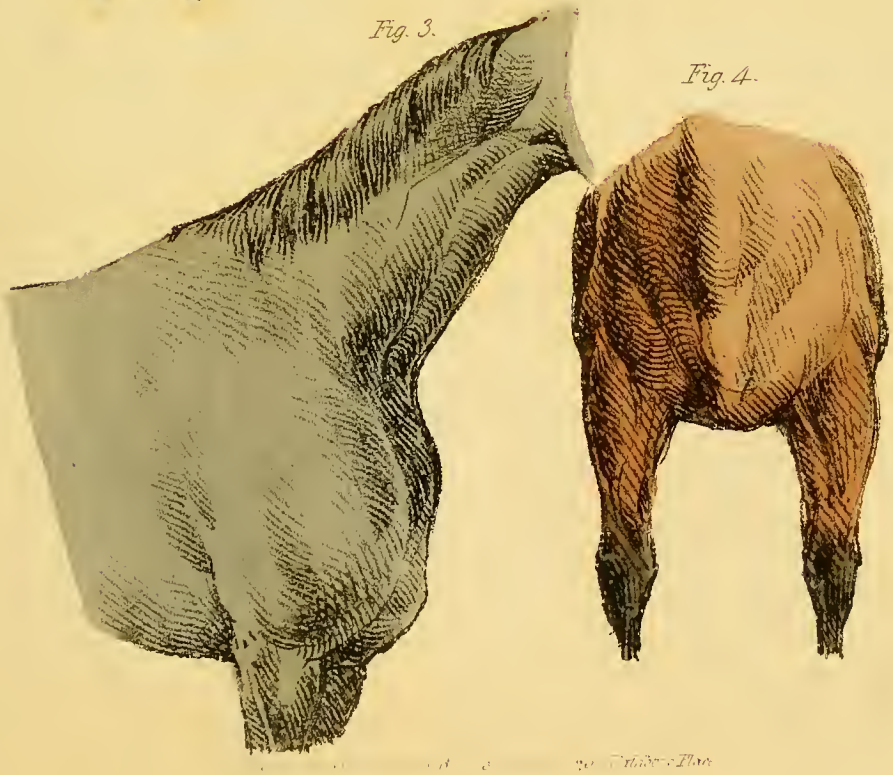


Plate 7

Fig. 1.

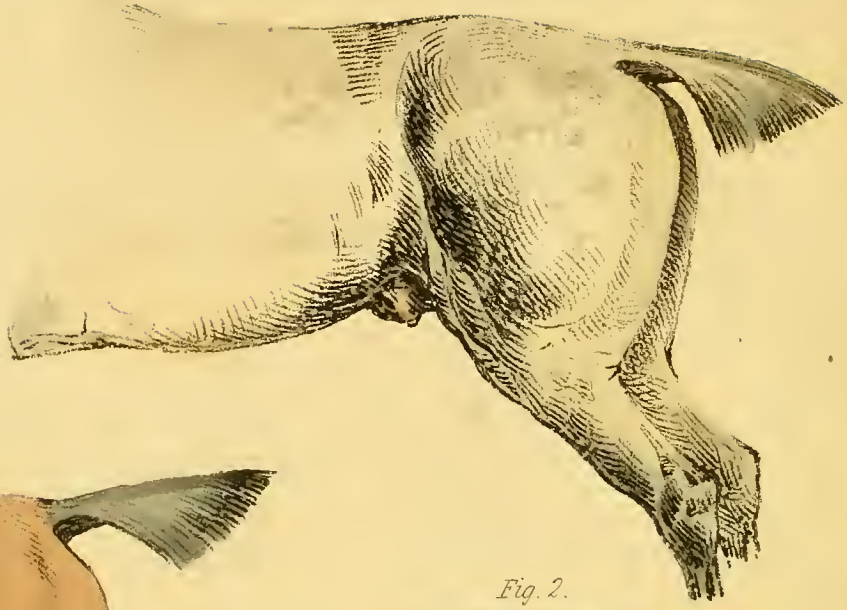


Fig. 3

Fig. 2.

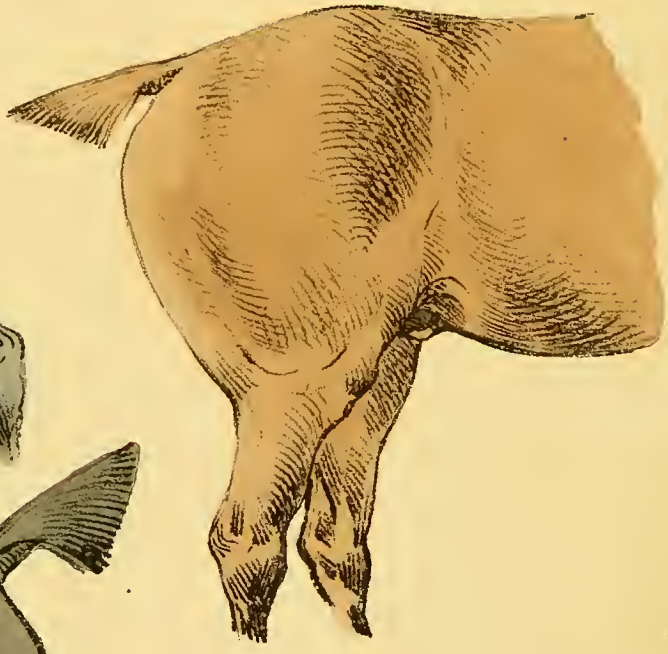


Fig. 4.

PLATE VII.

Figure 1.—Is the carcass of a horse formed for use, as well as goodness of appearance. The carcass should be shaped like a cask; the hucks not too much hid in the flesh, nor yet particularly prominent; rather flat in the flank; plenty of hard projecting muscle on the thigh; the hock should look and feel like entire bone, covered with skin.

Figure 2.—Is what may be called very pretty, and perhaps be useful in its way: heavy and round in the flank and thigh; the legs standing almost perpendicular. Speed or action cannot be expected from a horse so formed, though he may prove safe and pleasant to a gentle rider, or well calculated to walk or canter on the London stones.

Figure 3.—Is formed for power and speed; particularly calculated for hunting; the thigh and hock well furnished, but rather too much cramped, or bent, to deserve the character of beauty: but animals thus shaped, almost without exception prove speedy and good leapers.

Figure 4.—Is of a common, well-looking quarter, with many good points, and showy; but not likely to be famous for either speed or action.

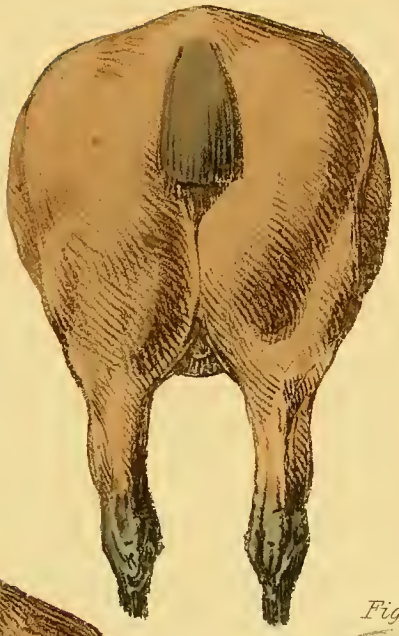
PLATE VIII.

Figure 1.—Is the quarter of a horse well formed, being strong and handsome, well marked with muscle and bone, and not over-burthened with flesh; but standing at too great a distance between the hocks.

Figure 2.—This figure, although rather raw in the hucks, and possessing a great deal of prominent bone, is still better adapted for speed and action than Figure 1; the hocks being nearer together, but still standing straight, give him the power of quicker action and longer throws in the gallop. The mare from which this was taken, is a remarkably good and well-tried hunter.

Figure 3.—A horse with such a quarter as this may possibly be useful, if quiet, to a timid lady or gentleman, who do not extend beyond six or eight miles in one day. If well formed in other parts, he may be called a very pretty, plump, and showy *tit;* but, like many other pets, of no real use.

Fig. 1.



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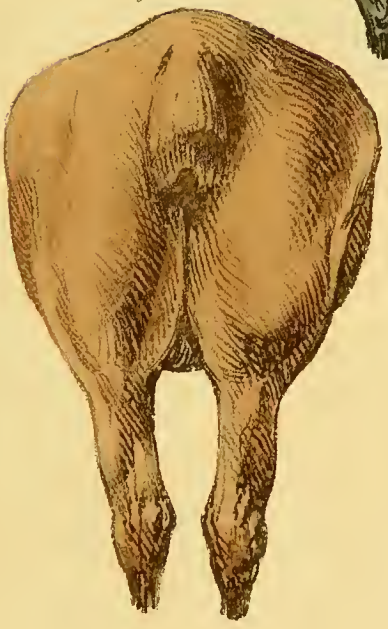

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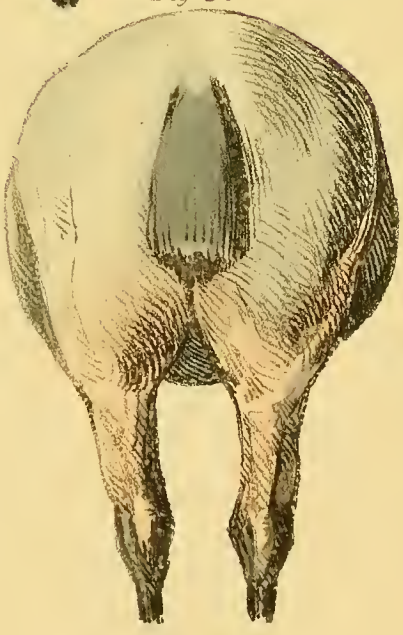

Plate 0

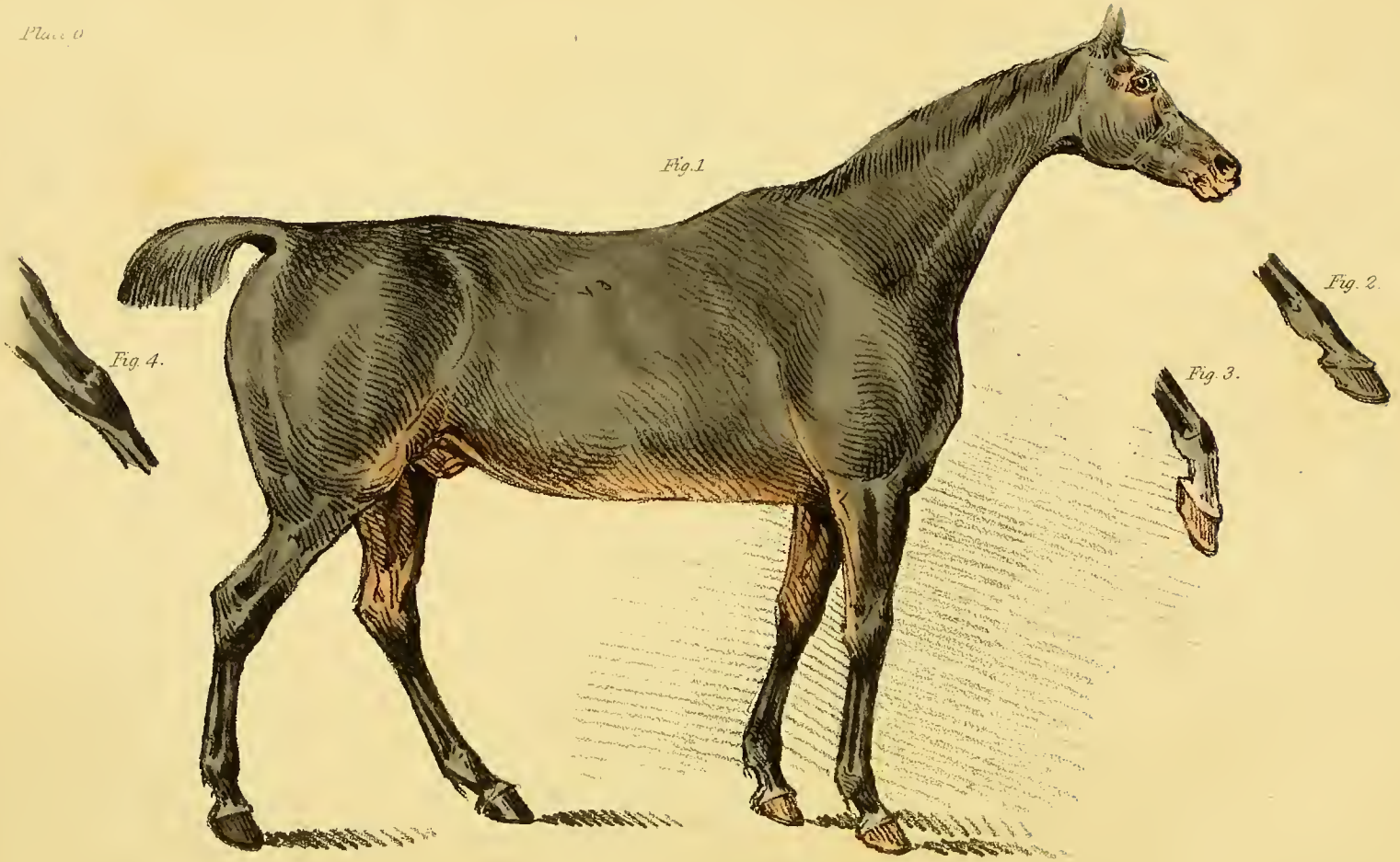

Fig. 1

Fig. 2.

Fig. 3.

Fig. 4.

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PLATE IX.

The animal from which this drawing was made, is accounted one of the finest figures in England; although at the time the portrait was taken, he was ten years old, and had done a great deal of work, both in the field and in harness. A small head and neck in a horse, are considered a great beauty; and in the original of this drawing, I think they are the least I ever saw, in proportion to the body.

I have described this horse in the action of walking, for which he is particularly famous, and have paid much attention to his method of delivering the knee and foot. In walking fast he does not move two legs at the same time; for example, in lifting the near leg before and the off leg behind, he raises one immediately after the other, bearing the shoulder well forward before he takes the foot from the ground; and, having raised the feet, he delivers the knee in the form of *Figure* 4; and the foot as *Figure* 2, which, on a comparison with *Figure* 3, the Reader will find, gives the animal a manifest advantage: for in the action of Figure 3, he must lose much ground; while in the action of Figure 2, his gain would be equal to three inches at every step, which, in a mile, would make a difference of a hundred yards—a very material consideration in a match. The quarters of this animal are long, and very strong; and he delivers the hind foot well under the body, bending it at the same time at the hock, and rising well in the toe, or point of the foot of the standing leg. At every step in walking, and indeed in all other action, the shoulder should be seen to play free; for it may be laid down as a general maxim, that a horse confined in the shoulders can never have good action.

PLATE X.

THE TROT.

This pace being the only one used in harness, requires particular notice, as there is a great variety in this action. The annexed plate is intended to shew the plain spanking trot, in which the horse should carry his head well up, and, when out of harness, the nose pointed forward. In the step, the shoulder should be thrown well out, the knee rather straight, the hoof pointed forward and put to the ground, as a soldier is taught to march; not by putting the heel down first, nor the foot full on the ground; but the point of the foot should touch the ground slightly before the heel, with an even motion, without a catch or jirk; the shoulder at the same time leaning well over the bearing leg, so as to make the reach the longer, as in *Figure* 1; the quarter being thrown well under, but not so far as to occasion an over-reach. I have heard many people, who are great fanciers in trotting horses, admire the wide action behind: but I am not of that opinion, as I think it a great sign of weakness, and excessively awkward and ugly. I have never found horses with such action able to perform long journies.

If a horse were to use his fore legs in the form of *Figure* 2, he must lose considerably in ground, and be liable to trip and fall at any little roughness in the road, and must lose in speed by delivering the hind foot as *Figure* 3.

Plate 10

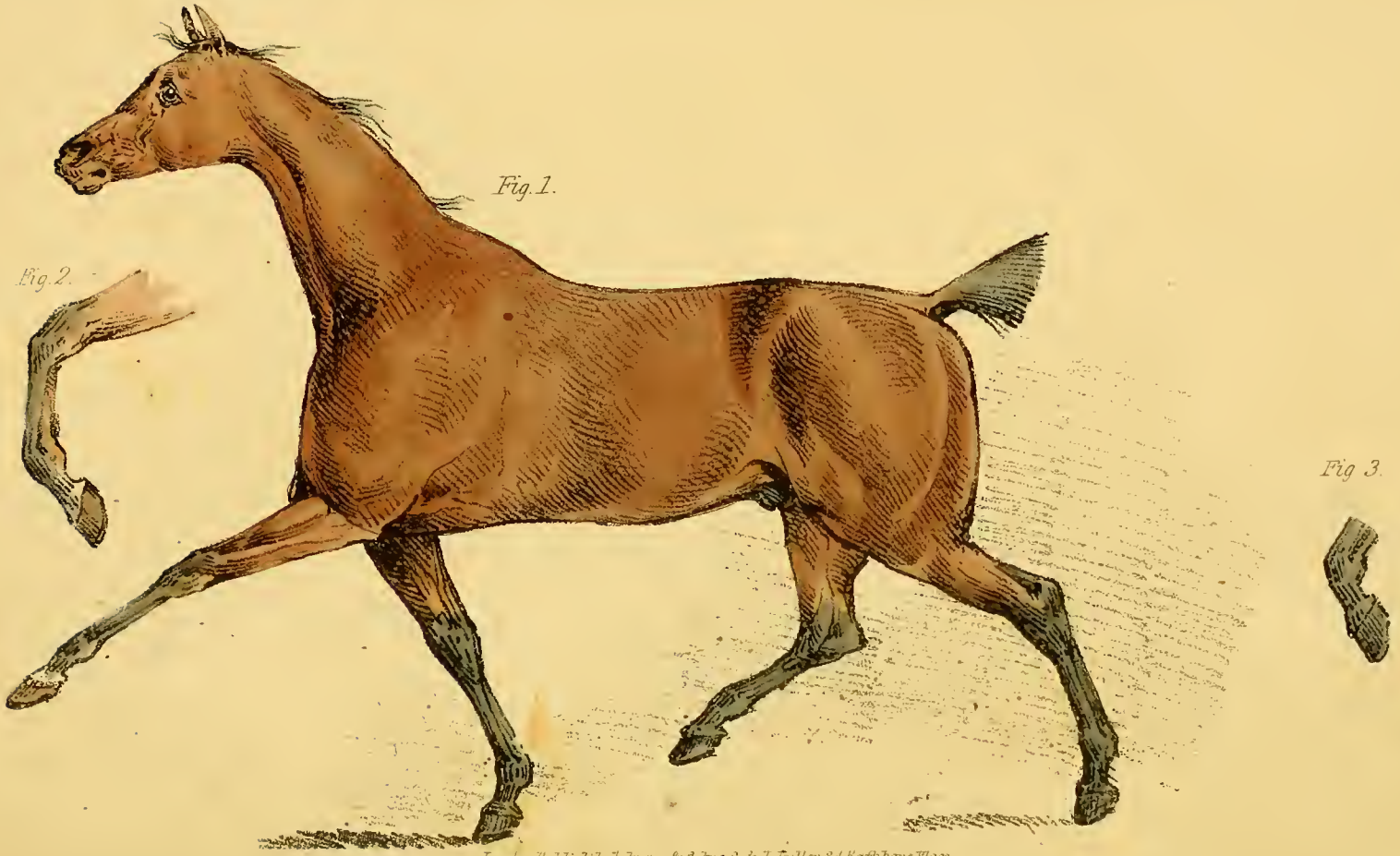

Fig. 1.

Fig. 2.

Fig 3.

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Plate II

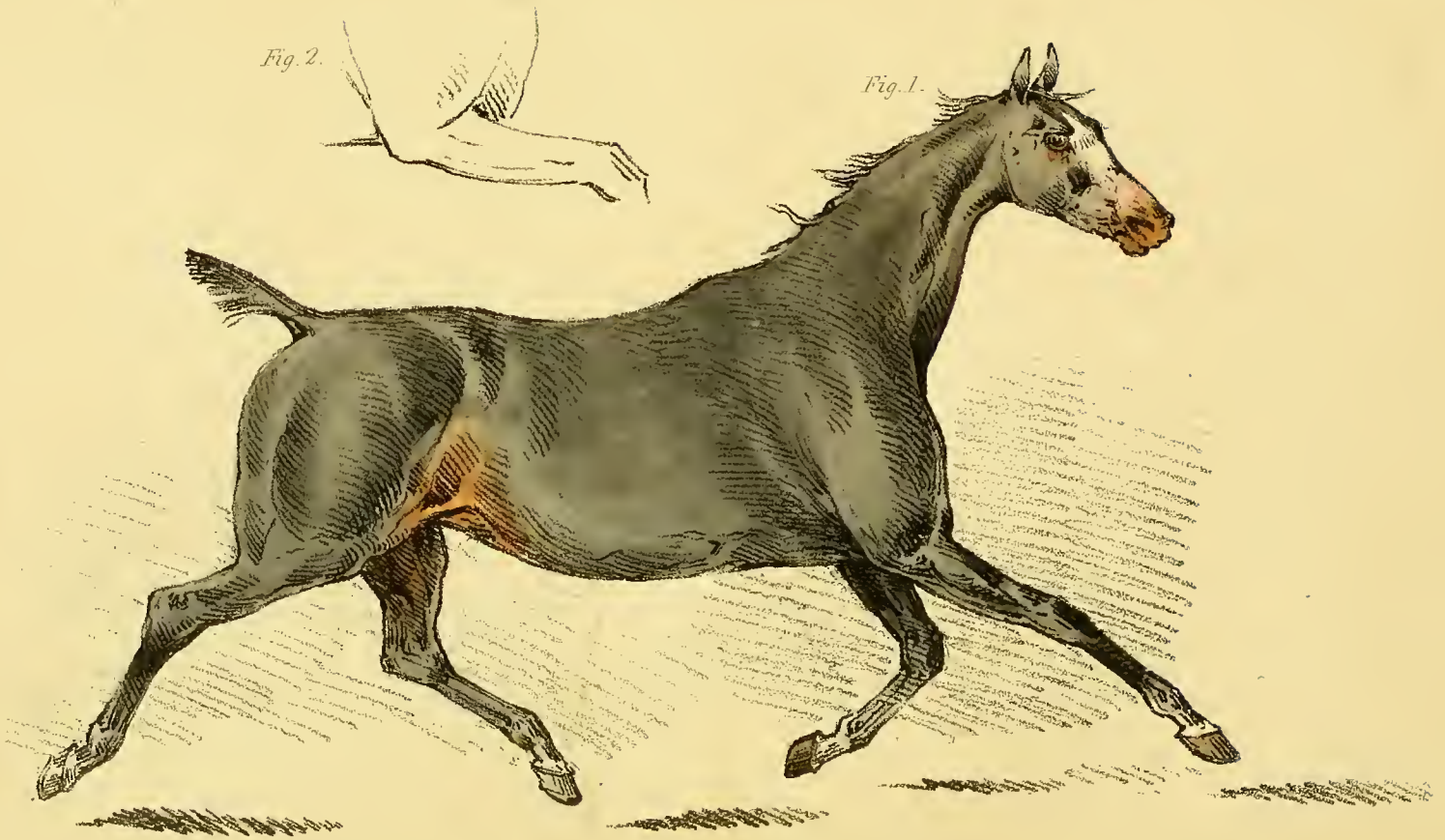

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PLATE XI.

THE RUNNING TROT.

Most of our very best trotters have this action, which, in some degree, is between the trot and gallop; it is a very easy pace for the rider, but very deficient in elegance. The pace is neither fit for carriage nor gig.

The subject from which this plate was taken, is very finely formed for strength and action; the legs are delivered in the same way as in the plain trot; but much faster and nearer the ground, and with a sort of scramble, far from pleasing to the eye. As in the plain trot, the shoulder should be thrown well forward, so that in a side view it should hide the breast. Compare the shoulder of *Figure* 1 with that of *Figure* 2.

PLATE XII.

THE CANTERER, OR LADIES' HORSE.

THE horse selected for this purpose should be particularly tight in the head and neck; the play or springing appearance of the head giving great beauty to this action. The horse from which this drawing was made, is pretty and showy, without having the power of any thing like speed or good action; the buttocks round, without any show of muscle; tight in the hocks and legs; although short and strong in the pastern, his legs are not well able to carry his carcass.

This description of horse, in the horse-dealer's hands, is very apt to please and catch the attention of a person not much in the habit of purchasing. I never had but one of this sort in my possession, which I bought during a lameness occasioned by an accident in hunting. He was, like the present subject, very showy, and by most people called handsome: but the first journey I took him, a distance of only eighteen miles, he performed with such extreme difficulty in three hours, that I never chose to mount him again. When any horse has power of speed and action, the play or movement of the bones and muscles is perceptible. The horse round and puffed in the quarter, very seldom has strength or speed. Compare with *Figures* 2 and 3. The hock, which is flat and straight underneath, must be deficient in strength.

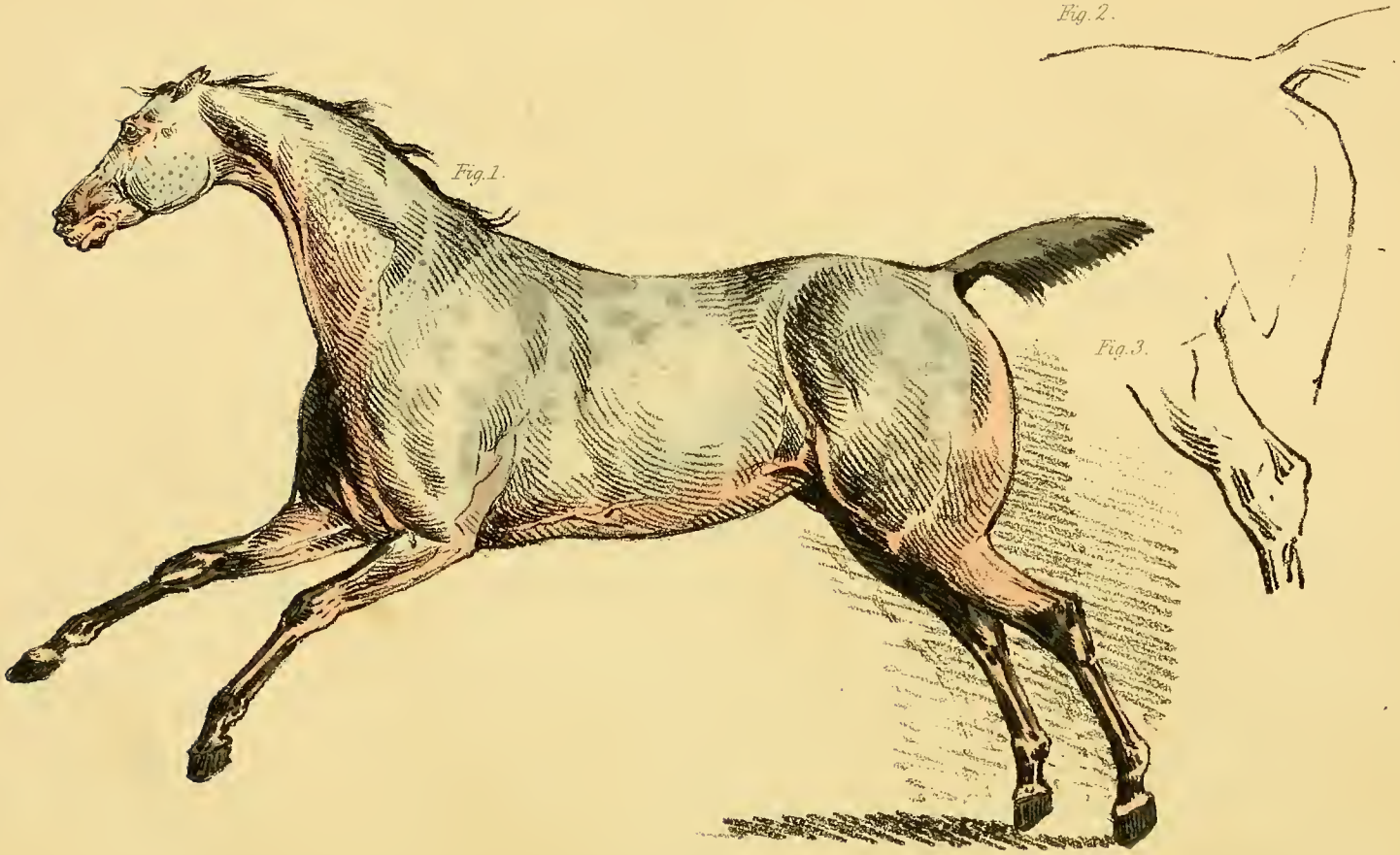

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Plate 13

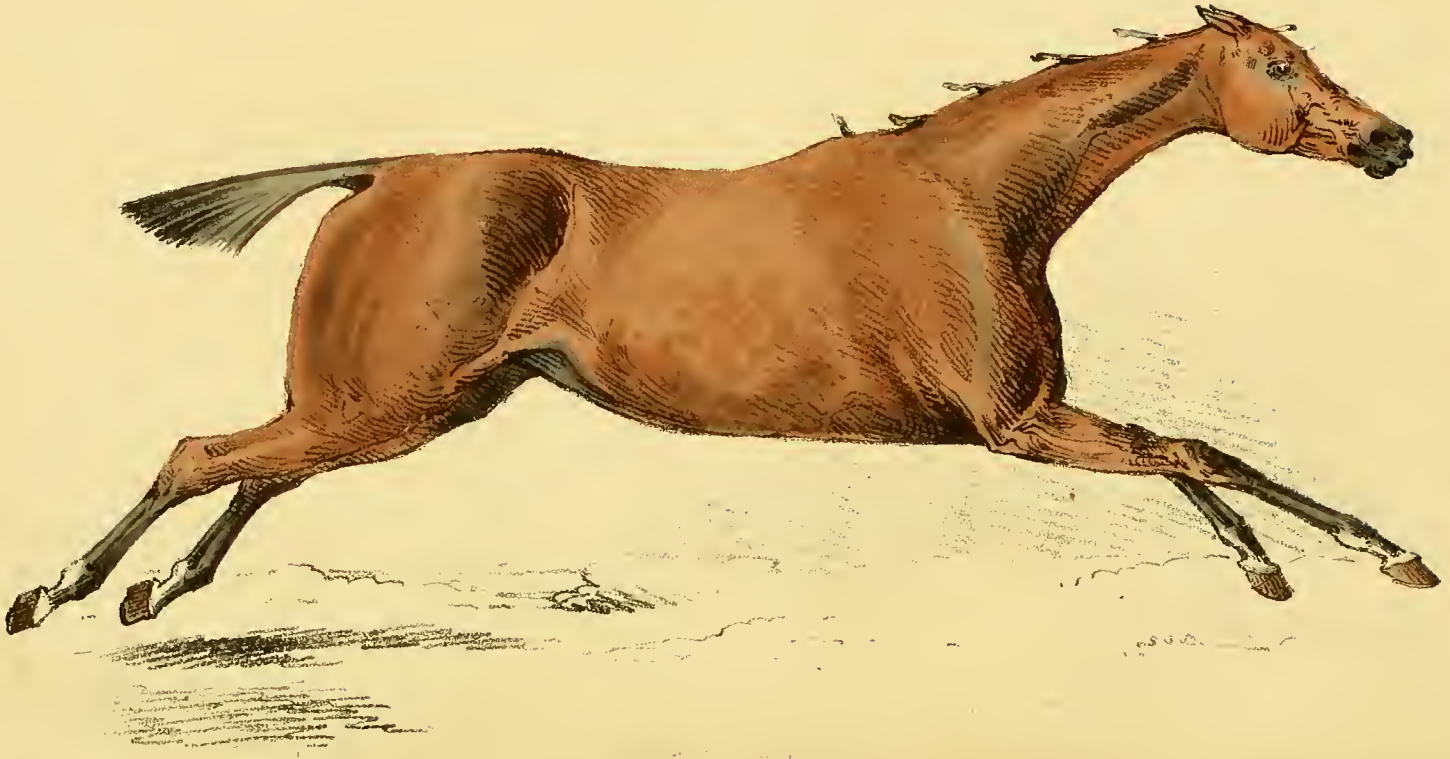

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PLATE XIII.

THE GALLOP.

In the race horse the necessary points differ from the hunter and road horse. In the first place, he is not got so much up in the forehand, which makes a great difference in the appearance. The ewe-necked horses are in general speedy, although this qualification is by no means amiable for any other purpose. It is commonly supposed that length in the pastern is indispensable in the race horse; but this opinion appears to me to be very erroneous, except as it regards a light weight and a short course. I have taken notice that the best horses of the present day are well formed, and strong in the legs. In full action the leg should be thrown well out, with a quick stroke, rather near the ground than otherwise. All the legs should point straight forward, and appear to act with ease to themselves. If a horse should rock, that is, throw his quarters from one side to the other, he never can be speedy: he should seem to glide over the surface of the ground, without any symptoms of violent action. Horses vary greatly in the gather, or method of bringing their legs together after being well opened in the reach. If he makes the stride too far, it will oblige him to throw up his back like a hog to form the gather. Any action varying from a direct line forward, must impede his progress. All horses should gallop nearly on the same principle; but it is necessary that military horses and dashing roadsters should raise themselves more on their haunches, and, as it is commonly called, fight a little more with their forehand.

PLATE XIV.

THE HUNTER's GALLOP.

The hunter, although he may be thorough bred, is obliged to go through deep and heavy grounds, which will occasion him to use a different method of galloping. It is not necessary that he should lay himself out in the reach like the race horse; if he did, the difficulty he would find in gathering himself again, would knock him up in ten minutes; or, at any rate, would greatly distress him, and disqualify him for a long day. His strokes should be short and regular, not throwing himself much off the balance. The hunter should also have the immediate power of extending or diminishing his length of stride: for until the horse can accomplish this part of his business, he never can make a good leaper, much more a safe one. Having myself been much in the habit of riding young and violent horses with fox-hounds, I am well acquainted with the great difficulty and danger there is in leaping them before they are possessed of this power and knowledge.

Pl. XX.

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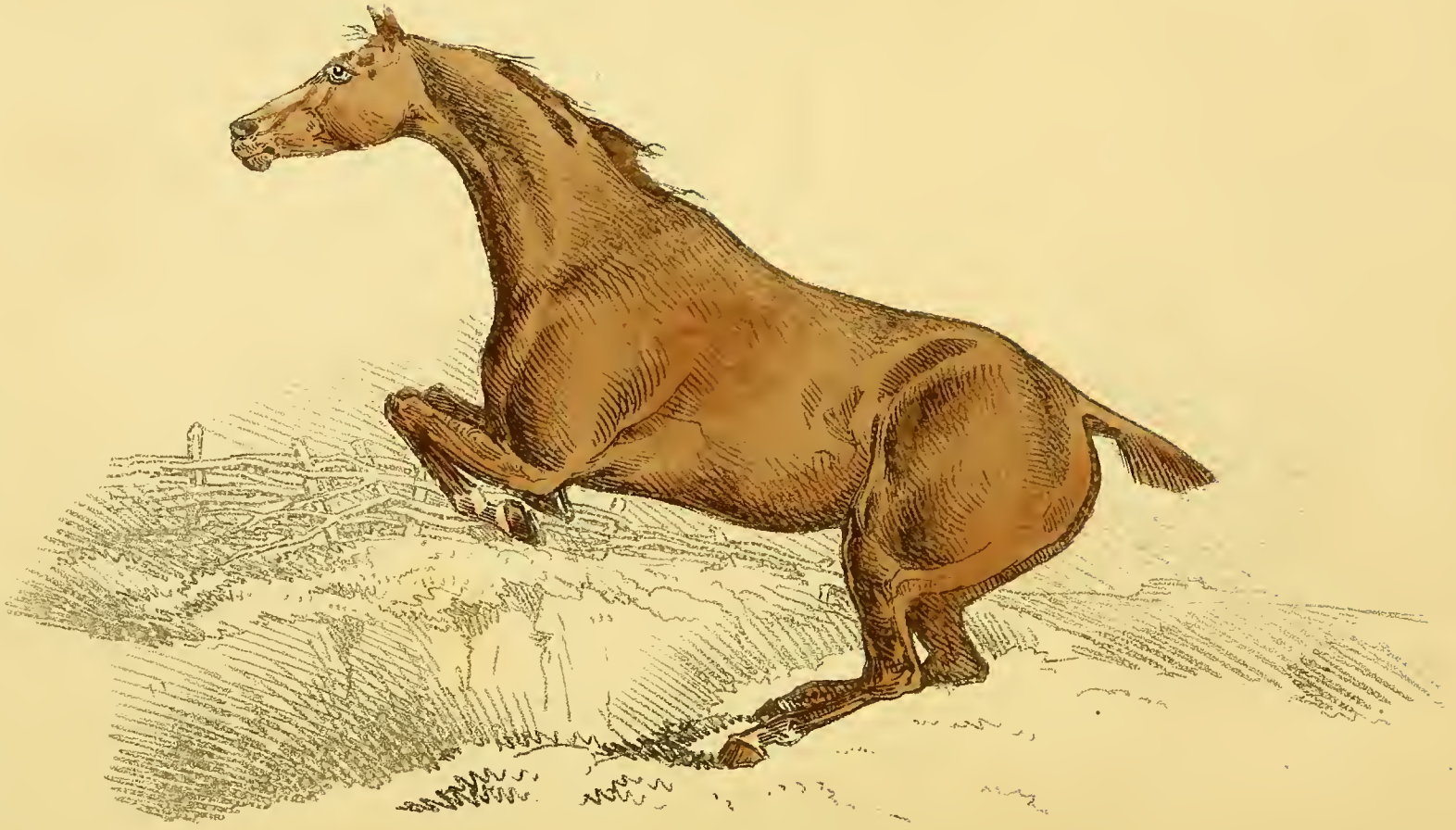
Plate 15



London, Published July 1.1816. by S & J. Fuller; 34. Rathbone Place.

PLATE XV.

LEAPING.

Steady leaping, and to do it well, is more difficult for a horse to acquire than any other sort. As I mentioned under the head of Hunting, the horse should be fully competent to the task of measuring his ground; the quarters should be thrown well under him at the last stride, so that he can form a centre to his weight on his hind feet when he is at full rise, and be able in a standing leap to keep that balance, until he feels able to make his throw or spring; and at the moment he opens his fore legs, the hind ones should be caught quite under the body: for in slow and steady leaps, it is almost impossible for the horse to extend his legs behind and leap with that safety which he can when gathered together; for instance, in double leaps where the horse is not able to see on the other side, which is very often the case, by throwing his quarters under him, the animal has the power to renew his leap with safety.

PLATE XVI.

LEAPING.

The fall or pitch, where there are double ditch fences and fences ditch from you, requires particular attention. It appears to me, that more falls are occasioned by the want of knowledge of this action of leaping on the part of the horse, than by any other description of ignorance or mistake. As soon as the spring is made, as mentioned in Plate XV., the hind legs should be so thrown over the fence, as to give a fine purchase, and the horse ought to appear to have almost the power of retracting his leap, if necessary. This shews confidence in the horse; and although I have heard many sportsmen declare that this confidence frequently tends to make the animal a short leaper, from many circumstances which have come within my own knowledge, I am clearly of opinion, that the assertion is not borne out by the fact. In my judgment, confidence will give the animal the power to direct his fore-feet to any point he may desire within his compass; and for his own safety, he will always cover enough space, unless prevented by his rider, which frequently occurs. In all cases where the leap is difficult, so as to require care and knowledge in the horse, instead of courage or rashness, there cannot be a doubt that the animal ought to be left to his own discretion, without being fettered by any supposed assistance on the part of the rider.

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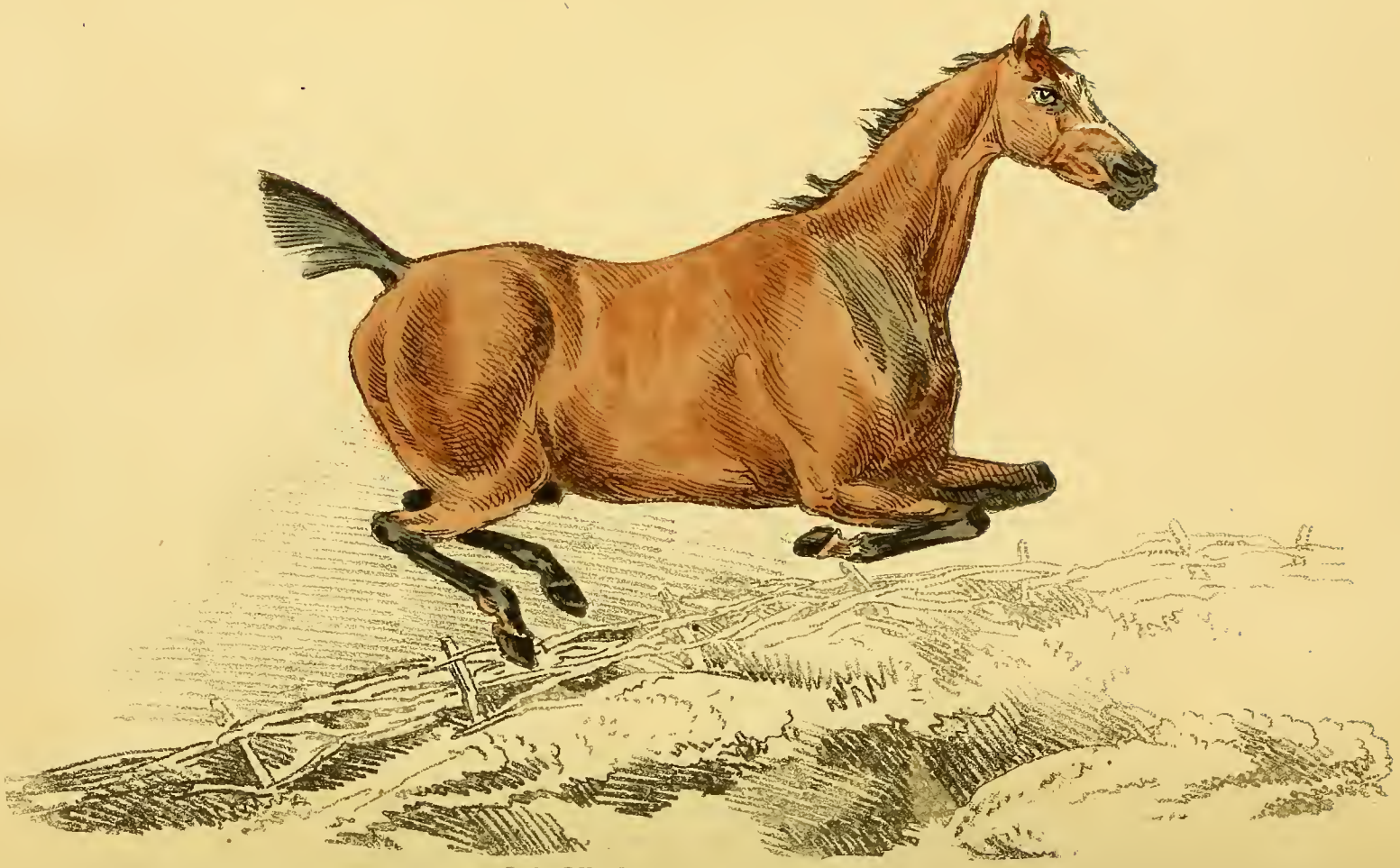

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PLATE XVII.

THE BUCKING LEAP.

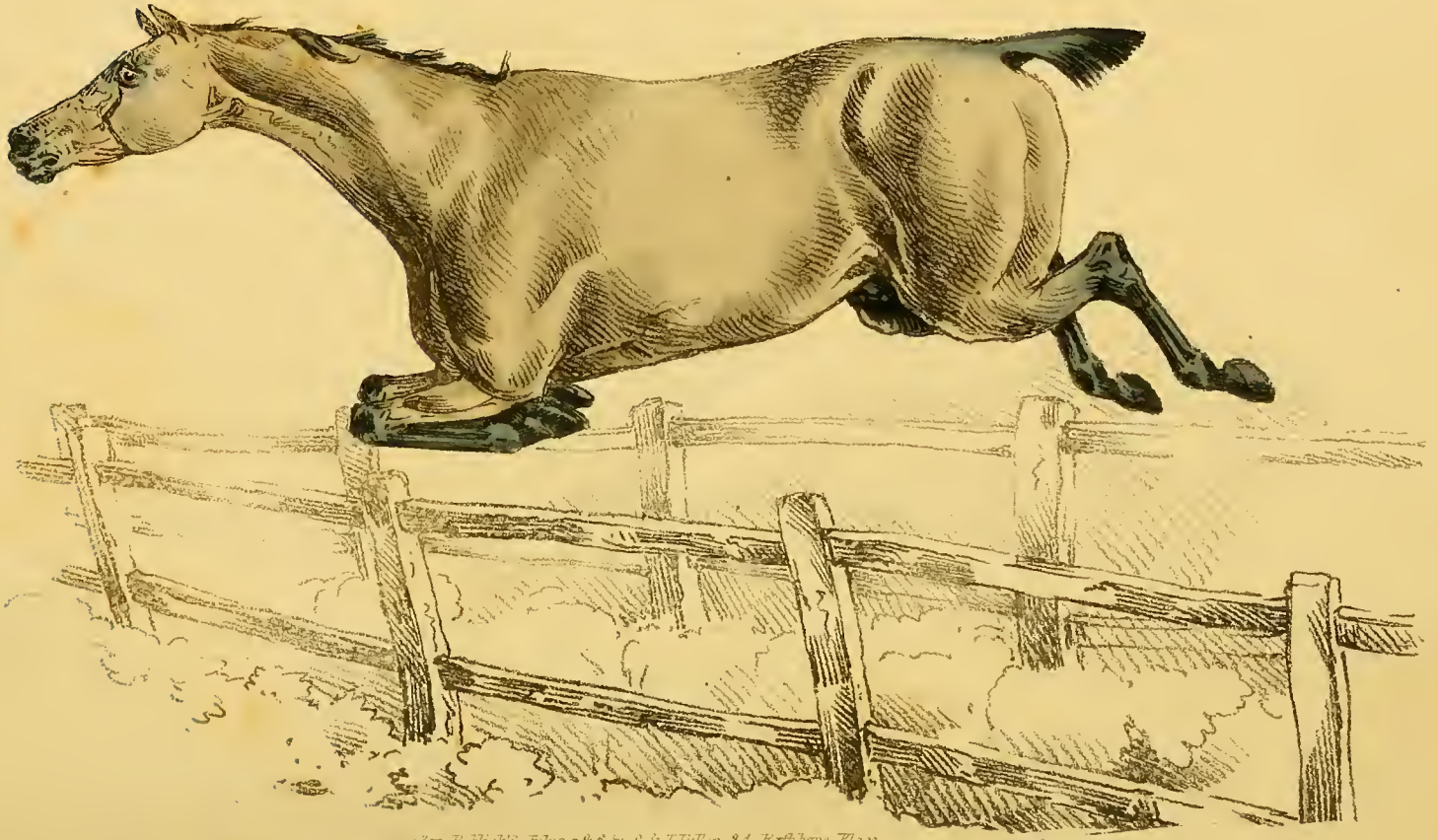
This leap is similar to the action of the deer; and the horse, in the performance of it, displays a very grand and prepossessing appearance. There ought to be a great distinction between the action of the animal in this leap, and in that which I before described: for although I have just remarked on the propriety of the horse gathering his quarters under him, I do not consider this rule as applicable to the fly leap. It is but rarely indeed that any but very hot horses follow this method, which certainly is not a good one. In the first place, the action itself requires great exertion, both on the part of the rider and the horse, an effort which is not at all calculated for endurance: secondly, it is very dangerous, as the horse addicted to it seldom knows whence to spring, or to take off from, or how to measure his leap; and it very often occurs that the animal, having his head cleaving the air, entirely forgets to put his fore-legs down to the ground, and consequently he comes bolt on his knees and chest. I rode a mare of this description for two seasons; she was four years old, and excessively violent, although a powerful leaper, as to height and distance. For the first season I had four or five falls a day upon an average, and all in consequence of her violent bucking leaps.

PLATE XVIII.

THE FLY LEAP.

To compass this mode of leaping, it is necessary that the horse should be possessed of great strength and courage: for here the horse springs from all four legs at the same time, at least so near, that the difference is not perceptible. The fore legs should be tucked tight under the body, the hind ones thrown as high and as far out as possible: to hunt in a country where such fences are used as the double timber fence, ditch between, it requires a horse well qualified; for to get on with any speed, the leaps must be made at once. I have been heartily tired even to see the trouble and patience it requires to perform the in and out. For river leaping the same action is necessary, but it is not necessary that the legs should be so much gathered.

Plate 18



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